

Troymouth. Feb. 1847

Messrs Bates, Hanson & White

Gentlemen,

I am directed by the Troymouth Female Anti Slavery Society to ask of you the use of the Orthodox Meeting House on the evening of the first Sunday in March for the purpose of hearing an Anti Slavery Lecture from Mr Garrison. This house has been so often refused to us that we feel desirous at the present time to lay before you some of the reasons that impel us to make these repeated requests, & also some of the reasons which should induce you, professing to be Christian men, to grant this which we now make. We earnestly desire to avoid the imputation of obstinacy or self will. It is not a determination to have our own way that induces us to make the annual effort to unclose your Church doors to the claims of the Slave. We have different & higher motives as we will endeavor to explain.

And first it is not because the Universalist House is denied to us that we ask yours. Those of our number whose religious opinions are in harmony with your own acknowledge with satisfaction & regret that it has been left to that Church alone to exhibit the example of Christian liberality & toleration, and that Church alone in this region claims the honour of having never been denied to the ^{with a single exception} ~~claims~~ cause of the Slave.

We ask for the Orthodox Church because we wish to make an ^{impressive} impression on the members of that parish. Most of them will not enter the Universalist meeting house. Either they conscientiously think it wrong to do so or are in fear of the censure of others & thus do not dare to hear for themselves. No more do they dare to take a read on Anti Slavery papers

under the proscription of their religious leaders. The bigoted Catholics
of our country are not more carefully guarded by their clergy
from receiving Protestant instruction than are the pro Slavery
orthodox churches by their clergy from every chance of
receiving Anti Slavery doctrine. We may ask for more that
they may have an opportunity to hear for themselves, &
if their minds have become so narrowed that they dare not
go into an heretical meeting house, we will not turn
aside from our labours for the slave to contend with them
on this point, but we will if possible, bring the truth into
their own church, trusting that if that truth shall cause
them "to remember those in bonds as bound with them"
they will no longer feel that the Jews have no dealings
with the Samaritans, but will recognize it as their duty to
labour with all who are seeking to elevate & comfort fallen
& suffering humanity.

Thus you will perceive that we ask for your house
that we may have access to your own members. We wish this
for their own sakes as well as for the slave's. No church can
consistently call itself a Christian one that is not labouring
heartily & sincerely for the deliverance of ^{those in bondage} ~~the slaves~~.
Think for a few moments only of the enormity of the sin
& the depth of the suffering involved in American Slavery
& the course of the Abolitionists in view of the conduct of
the American churches will not appear extreme.
We put it to your consciences whether if the American
churches gave to the abolition of slavery only the same
amount of time, money, & sympathy that they give
to the cause of Foreign Missions whether this grant
system of sin & ^{suffering} ~~wrong~~ could continue a year, for less
whether it could involve the nation in a war
unparalleled for enormity for the mere purpose of
extending slavery, & if you answer

as you must in the negative, is there not a few feet
responsibility resting on the American church in general
or the individual churches of Massachusetts, or the
very church whose parish you now represent, a responsibility
only to be discharged by vigorous & immediate action
on the slave's behalf. It is to that action we would
summon her.

But again we ask for the ^{your} church's meeting
house for the slave's sake. We must have some help in
undoing his chains. We are deeply grieved when we think of
his condition & remember how few there are in this place
who are willing to ~~give~~ ^{work} there ~~and~~ for his deliverance.
The condition of the country at the present time furnishes
another reason for our request. Could this infamous war
with Mexico continue another month were all the
churches of the Free States thrown freely open to the
Anti Slavery Lecturers. Surely not. Then on the
heads of those who oppose the free discussion of this question
must remain the guilt & the responsibility.

There are many other reasons that we might present,
but we forbear. We have confined ourselves to the
nearest & most practical reasons why our request should
be granted. We have said nothing of free discussion
in general, nothing of the injury ^{done} to the cause of
religion & good morals ^{in a neighborhood} ~~in general~~ by the pretensions of
opposition of a church to any great cause of reform,
nothing of the infidelity created by a church that
supports foreign missions with one hand & opposes
slavery with the other, nothing of our individual rights
as members of your church or as represented by few holders
in your parish. We do not know dwell on these
considerations. We ~~therefore~~ leave our request with you

Gentle men, respectfully asking you to remember your
our individual responsibilities. It is of little consequence
whether our respective spheres of action be large or small
whether they ^{be the} halls of Congress, the parish committee room
or a counting sewing circle. But it is of consequence
supplicate to stretch into the eternity before us whether
our duties in their respective spheres be worthily performed.
We feel that we have done our duty in asking for
your house. It is for you to say whether you can innocently
deny us. We would urge upon you to put yourselves &
your families in the condition of the slaves
& whatsoever ye would that men should do to you
do ye even so to them.

As soon as your convenience will permit will
you ~~be~~ have the kindness to give us your written
decision.

I remain very respectfully a believer of
the Board of the Weymouth Lunatic Asylum

A. W. Weston.